

Recent deaths in Switzerland

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them by knowing precisely what he can and cannot do. Absolute honesty with oneself is indispensable. Where, in other circumstances, eagerness and sporting ambition would prompt one to have another tug at the line, in rock-climbing these drives are suppressed by a lucid awareness of one's emerging limitations. It is fatal to go one step too far. This forces upon the climber an honest and salutary appreciation of what he can do. When he envisages a particular ascent, he will have to *know* that he can make it, even though he might be the first ever to attempt it. This knowledge cannot be dissociated from knowledge of one's capabilities.

Rock-climbing brings with it an immense feeling of solitude. Even though the climber may be having a partner, whilst he is climbing, he is alone in his struggle with the rock, the ice and their tricks. When he is twisting his hands to engage them in a minute chink which will be his only hold to life, he is alone and the partner who watches him anxiously ten metres below cannot exist. But he does, and this leads to the tremendous solidarity which rock-climbing fosters among its adepts. No other sport has such a highly uniting effect because none other calls for such mutual responsibility. Every climber is responsible for his comrades, a second overwhelming reason why he may not cheat. Every new and difficult ascension must be undertaken by climbers who have already climbed together, know each other, like and trust each other well. I knew my partners in this particular ascent—we had already done a few "four thousands" together—and I had no doubts concerning their trustworthiness and excellence as mountaineers. I would have refused a climb like this with anyone with whom I had not climbed before.

After moral honesty and the sense of responsibilities, the first quality which all members of a team trying a new and difficult ascent must possess is endurance, physical and moral. A brilliant climber may be worn out at the first third of the ascent; technique is useless without endurance. A moment can come when the leader is not sure whether he is able to accomplish the next move. Hesitation starts burdening his movements and, as he waits, he tires. The tiring process is surprisingly rapid. The coldness of the air and his prolonged tension make him start trembling and he is positively paralysed, unable to continue as leader. He will retreat to the nearest piton, hook his stirrup onto it and take a rest. Perhaps his exhaustion will make him slip and fall back some ten to twenty yards. He dangles at the end of his rope and may be too shocked to recover immediately, in which case he might well be a burden to the party for the rest of the ascent. The others accept the situation and are ready to risk their lives in saving him. But since the stakes are so high, they will make sure from the outset that such mishaps are really unexpected.

Continuing our ascent, we reached a pillar which was almost free of ice. We deliberated for some time whether we should unstrap our crampons and continue the ascent as ordinary rock-climbing, but decided to keep them on. In fact, the pillar was surfaced with a thin and treacherous glaze of frost which we bravely confronted straddling the rock awkwardly, not knowing whether we should cover that particular stretch using ice- or ordinary rock-climbing techniques.

Each of us found a suitable resting-ledge, and we stopped for lunch, eating "ovosports", sesame tablets and oranges. The position was not particularly comfortable. We were hampered by so many pitons and screws, straps and ropes, clothing sacs and other implements that we could hardly make a movement of relaxation. Performing our simplest natural needs proved a highly acrobatic and unbalanced feat.

We started-off again and, nine hours after having begun, were not far from the summit. We had originally reckoned with a nine-hour climb, but the most difficult was still to come and took far longer than expected. It was an ice mirror which spanned the last hundred metres of the ascent on which we spent not far from four hours. Imagine a beautifully sleek brow, ice which is of a deep, rich blue tinge and as hard as steel. As we edged our way up this mirror, all it would acknowledge of our passage were the two small dents left by the spikes that we had kicked into it furiously. The perfect polish of the surface was a sinister invitation to glide on it! We thought that St. Moritz could do with ice like this for its bobsleigh track. Reaching the end of the ordeal, we had two strong emotions. First, a huge slab of ice, the size of a truck, slid past us some forty metres away with a terrifying whistle and a wind which was like that of an express train. Secondly, a member of our party made a slip out of exhaustion and fell some five metres, fortunately the situation was promptly back under control.

After fourteen hours of climbing, we were on the summit. None of us had brought a camera, so these glorious moments were not immortalised on celluloid. But the epic ended in a classical way: we linked hands in a communion only known to rock-climbers, eat cherries dipped in kirsch (our tradition!), contemplated the beauty of the scenery that lay around us and admired the feat we had just achieved. This was not the end, by any means, and we were mountaineers too well seasoned to know that relaxing on our newly acquired laurels could lead to a sudden catastrophe. After half an hour's exhilaration, we started on the way down along the ridge. It was by no means short and easy. We made good use of our 60 metre rope for the purpose of roping down. But what we set out for, the ascent, was over. A contract which we had each made individually with ourselves had been honoured.

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Franz Walter Luethold (92), former president of the Court of Justice and Cantonal Council of Obwald.

Wilhelm Backhaus, pianist of international repute, (85). Wilhelm Backhaus had resided in Switzerland since 1933. His repertoire covered the works of all the great composers, from Bach to Richard Strauss, but, in his later days he confined it to the 32 piano sonatas and the 5 piano concertos of Beethoven.

Ernest Dessaux, the prefect of the district of Morges, who was drowned near Toulon. He was 67. He had presided over the Communal Council of Morges from 1929 to 1933 and was a member of the radical fraction of the Great Council of Vaud.

The Rev. Charles Freundler (75), in Thierrens. He has played an important role in the life of Swiss protestantism. From 1948 to 1964 he was head of the French-speaking section of the Secretariat for Protestant Assistance to Churches and Refugees. He is co-founder of the Federation of Reformed Churches and has been pastor of the French-speaking Swiss Church in London.

Max Grünfeld, economist and prominent financial expert, (82). He has been for decades the economic correspondent of the "National-Zeitung" and the influential leader-writer of the "Finanz-Revue".

Dr. Hans Tribolet (85), historian and author. Well known under the pseudonym "Hans Rych", Dr. Tribolet was for many years vice-director of Radio Bern. He has composed numerous radio-dramas and was principal editor of the historiographical lexicon of Switzerland.

(A.T.S.)

PROTECTION OF THE "SWISS-MADE" BRAND

According to an editorial in "Informations-FH", the organ of the federation of watch industries, the fame of Swiss watches was constantly inspiring imitations and falsified statements of origin of watches sold around the world. In South-East Asia, one can buy "Swiss watches" whose movements are produced in Russia, whose cases and dials come from Hongkong and whose figures and watch-glasses are manufactured in Japan.

This was a growing problem and it was estimated that 100,000 faked Swiss watches were sold in the Middle-East in a month and 10,000 in Europe. Swiss watch industry was sparing no efforts in fighting against these new parasites, many of which could be arrested and tried. The editorialist ended by underlining the need for a far better protection of the "Swiss-made" brand.